

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Assist and Support School Improvement Success Team (ASSIST) Update

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), Section 1116 and KRS 158.6455.

History/Background:

Existing Policy. Over the last several years, school districts in Kentucky have been held accountable for progress through the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Both of these accountability systems include consequences for schools and districts not making expected progress. Until the 2008-09 school year, schools and districts identified under CATS were provided assistance primarily through the Highly Skilled Educator (HSE) program. On the federal side, districts identified for improvement under NCLB were supported through assistance models approved by the department such as Voluntary Partnership Assistance Teams (VPAT), State Assistance Teams (SAT) and National Assistance Teams (NAT) models.

In order to better serve all of these schools and districts in a more collaborative manner, the process used to implement Kentucky's statewide system of support as required in Section 1116 of NCLB and through state statute was enhanced for the 2008-09 school year. The new process utilizes a collaborative team approach to providing support and technical assistance and is called ASSIST (Assist and Support School Improvement Success Team). ASSIST Team membership includes leadership (including the superintendent and principals) from the identified local school districts and identified schools within those districts. Those team members are joined by staff from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) who assist the district in carrying out its corrective action plan by securing services and technical assistance to support the goals of the plan. KDE staff are selected based on expertise needed by the district (a special educator, an achievement gap specialist, reading coach, etc). The state team members are fluid, depending on local need. In addition, districts may contract with other education partners for role specific assistance (i.e., superintendent coach, school board coach, school council coach).

In order to ensure compliance with this intervention approach, each identified school district is required to submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the KDE that defines what expectations they will meet. In addition, each ASSIST team provides a monthly status report to the KDE that serves as the documentation for the implementation of these assurances. The report includes sections on: 1) Each targeted school's priority

needs; 2) Activities planned and implemented to address the priority needs; 3) Requests for services needed from sources outside the ASSIST Team and other district personnel; and 4) Evaluation of the impact of activities on teaching and learning.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Early indications are that this model of intervention is having some very positive effects in each school district. KDE staff is currently compiling information in the ASSIST Team reports to provide data on the types of activities and their effect on student performance. A report will be generated and shared with the KBE at the June meeting.

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